

# Christianity and Crisis

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## Our Korean Policy in Perspective

AS THIS is written the results of the cease-fire negotiations cannot be guessed, but the prospect of an end of actual fighting in Korea makes this a suitable time to see what has been done there in perspective.

Three factors make it difficult to do justice to the real achievements in Korea. One is a general feeling of dismay concerning the total world situation. The conflict is so deep and many sided, the enemy has such varied weapons and strategies of which the military weapons and strategies are not the most important, and the ultimate threats are so full of horror that we are tempted to think that nothing done is of any real value. This feeling of dismay that is not far from despair is pervasive and colors our thinking about every particular problem. The realities that arouse this feeling are so new to American experience that we have not learned how to live with them. For this very reason we probably exaggerate them.

A second factor is the terrible cost of the Korean action taken by itself, its cost in casualties to ourselves, its cost to Korea in everything, its cost to the innumerable Chinese victims of "operation killer," most of whom planned no aggression but probably believed what they were told about an imperialistic threat to their own country. The fact that the lives of most of us are so normal makes the casualties in Korea seem more intolerable than is the case when the whole country is on a war basis.

A third factor is the falsification of the issues of the Korean action for partisan purposes. There is some excuse for General MacArthur's own feeling that if men are dying in war we should behave as though it were war and push through to victory, but there is no excuse for the use of the General by politicians to stir up public clamor to discredit the government's policy. The Senate hearing helped to clear the air for those who followed it but the air is still poisoned by a campaign of falsification that began long before the dismissal of MacArthur.

In spite of all of these difficulties it should be pos-

sible now to see the Korean policy as a whole and to estimate some of the things that it has accomplished.

1. It did serve notice on the Communist world that the extension of Communism by military force from one country to another will not be tolerated. This doesn't solve the problem of how to prevent the extension of Communism because indirect aggression through a Communist movement within a country is still possible, but it may well save other nations from direct aggression and it may save the world from the general war that a series of cases of direct military aggression would surely provoke. The defense against indirect aggression is a long-term problem and the military approach will be inconclusive.

2. The Korean policy has been based on the United Nations and the moral meaning of what has been done is derived in large measure from that fact. In so far as it is successful it will give strength to the United Nations. It is the clearest case of collective action to prevent aggression on record.

3. The military action in Korea was limited in scope and in the weapons used. It is here that the people who have sought to misrepresent the policy have been most blind. Our civilian authorities and our military authorities have kept their heads. Refusal to extend the war to China, refusal to use the atomic bomb, refusal to insist on the unification of Korea by military force suggest the limited character of the action. Those who seek to discredit this policy have often tried to show that our government has been influenced by other nations in the United Nations. If it has been so influenced that is as it should be. This limited military action has not only prevented general war; it has also demonstrated that we are not trying to destroy Communism in China or in any other Communist nation by military force. We may hope that by various other means we may help to destroy Communist regimes but we do not intend to use military force to accomplish this objective. The Communist world as a whole is so drenched with propaganda that it may not be impressed by this

demonstration but, if there are any Communist leaders who are still in touch with realities outside their world, they may be able to believe that they need not fear military attack from us. No one knows how far such fear of attack aggravates the conflict between the two worlds but it is a factor which we should seek to eliminate as far as possible. Much that is said by our citizens would confirm the Communists in this fear; this policy of limited military action may help to dispel it. It should also help to dispel the fear of America that is widespread in many non-Communist countries, especially in Asia.

4. The action in Korea has never been allowed by those responsible for policy to obscure the larger conflict and the demands upon America that are involved in it. One of the strangest phenomena is the fact that many of those who cry "appeasement" whenever any step is taken to limit the Korean war are the very politicians who are calling for lower taxes, fewer controls, a less alert and disciplined

approach to the greater danger. The essence of appeasement is that it is piecemeal surrender that leaves a country weaker to resist the next demand upon it. That same result may be attained by legislative action on the part of those who use the word, "appeasement," so freely.

One of the wisest and best-informed commentators on events, Mr. James Reston of *The New York Times*, ends a recent article about what has been accomplished in Korea (July 1, 1951) with the following words which are needed to counteract the campaign of falsification that has been mentioned:

For the feeling of men more devoted to accuracy and fair play than Senator McCarthy is that we have neither been defeated nor betrayed; that we have served our principles without provocation or appeasement; and that the Korean effort, even though it was not pushed to the extremity of unconditional surrender, has been one of the noblest chapters of American history.

—JOHN C. BENNETT.

## India Attempts Democracy

JAMES P. ALTER

THIS NOVEMBER approximately 170 million Indians will go to the polls in the first national elections since India gained her independence. The voters (nearly 90% of whom are illiterate) will be asked to choose between a bewildering variety of parties and candidates. Socialists, Communists, right-wing Hindu communalists, and a host of small factional groups will contest the claims of the dominant Congress party. The size of the electorate makes this the world's most massive experiment in political democracy. Its outcome may well determine the political future of India and perhaps of all of Asia.

Until 1947 the struggle for independence dominated Indian politics. Its negative aspect was clear and strong. I remember being accosted by a group of schoolboys. "Hindusthan chhor do!" they shouted at me, "Hindusthan chhor do!" (Quit India.) This slogan, adopted by the Congress in 1942, was one of the main rallying cries of Indian nationalism. But nationalism was also positive. "Once the British go," a young lawyer told me, "we will build a new India. The Congress has great plans." I attended a mammoth political rally at which Pandit Govind Vallabh Pant, now Premier of India's largest State, described in glowing terms what the nation could do once it was free to manage its own affairs. So far as I could

tell, no one present questioned his vision of India's future.

During this period nationalism's only real competitor was religious communalism, represented by the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, leader of the League, had broken off from the Congress charging that Muslim interests could never be secure in the presence of a Hindu majority. The Mahasabha, a Hindu counterpart of the League, contended that India was essentially Hindu and that her national life could be built only on the basis of Hindu religion and culture. The Mahasabha was never large, but the League successfully challenged the Congress and finally forced Gandhi and Nehru to agree to a division of the country.

Prior to independence there was little party division along economic lines. The Congress included many of India's leading industrialists, side-by-side with an active Socialist group which claimed Nehru's support. The Communists were expelled from the Congress in 1945, but this was due to their support of Russia and the allies during the war which brought them into open conflict with the nationalist struggle against the British. Communism's appeal was far less than that of nationalism or religious communalism. During elections held early in 1946

the Communist Party captured only 8 seats in the Provincial Assemblies as against 930 for the Congress and 427 for the League.

### *Left, Right or Dead Center?*

Pandit Nehru once prophesied that as soon as the Congress fulfilled its task of liberating the country it would be replaced by parties with differing economic and political views. At first this break-up was prevented by serious problems facing the new government. The withdrawal of experienced British administrators, post-partition riots in the Punjab, the war in Kashmir, the murder of Gandhi by members of the Hindu Mahasabha—these and other problems convinced most Indians that the Congress was the only organization capable of preserving the fruits of independence. The new government did a great deal to justify this popular confidence. Outstanding non-Congress leaders, such as Dr. Ambedkar, spokesman for the depressed classes, and Dr. John Mathai, a Christian economist, were brought into the central cabinet. The forty million Indian Muslims were given a fair share of protection against Hindu and Sikh communalists. Hundreds of princely states were absorbed into the structure of the Indian Union. Under Congress leadership a new constitution was adopted proclaiming India a sovereign democratic republic, and guaranteeing, among other reforms, the legal abolition of untouchability. Even India's worst critics were forced to admit that the new regime had done surprisingly well.

During its four years in power the Congress has become increasingly conservative. Policy statements, which formerly were strongly socialist in tone, now advocate a mixed economy with limited controls and considerable freedom for private enterprise. This change has been due to the practical difficulties of national administration and to the growing influence within the Congress of India's big business. The party is still committed to the abolition of the semi-feudal *zamindari* system of land tenure. But aside from this its radical program of domestic reform is fairly well bogged down.

In the forthcoming elections the Congress will be challenged by a wide variety of parties. To its left are the Socialists and Communists. The former split off from the Congress in 1948, charging that Nehru had become a prisoner of the capitalists. Led by American-educated Jaya Prakash Narayan, the Socialist Party of India is an anti-Communist and parliamentary organization, with aims similar to those of the British Labor Party. Its headquarters are in Bombay, where it has a strong hold on some of the major labor unions. Early in June it staged one of the biggest political demonstrations seen in Delhi in recent times. Seventy-five thousand red-

capped peasants and workers marched nine miles through the streets of the capital to protest against "the Nehru Government's utter failure to provide the people with even the barest requirements of food, clothing and houses."

The Communists represent the extreme left-wing of Indian politics. Their party was formed in 1924 but had to remain underground until 1942 when, because of its support of the war against Japan, the British authorities gave it legal recognition. During the war it grew in membership and gained control of India's major trade unions. But its policies so angered the nationalists, many of whom spent the war years in prison, that it never gained a wide popular following. After independence the Communists adopted a policy of violent struggle against the new government and its Socialist "hangers-on." But except in Hyderabad State, where because of unsettled conditions local Communist groups were able for a time to gain control of several rural districts, the new policy proved a failure. By the end of 1949 many Communist leaders were in jail and the party membership was badly split by disagreements as to strategy and tactics. In January 1950 the Cominform, through its official journal, criticized the Indian Party and ordered it to work for a united front of "all classes, parties, groups and organizations willing to defend the national independence and freedom of India—against the Anglo-American imperialists oppressing it and against the reactionary big *bourgeoisie* and feudal princes collaborating with them." In obedience to this directive the Indian Communists ousted their General Secretary and formed a new Central Committee. Since then they have publicly admitted some of their sins of violence and have tried to persuade the government and other parties that they are now prepared to abide by constitutional procedures. In Bengal this appeal has met with some success. Late in March of this year the United Progressive Bloc (a Communist-led coalition of radical groups) captured a majority of seats on the Municipal Board of Howrah, Calcutta's largest suburb. The government, however, has refused to be convinced and recently accused the Communists of carrying on wide-spread violence in Assam, India's northeast state which borders on Burma and China.

To the right of the Congress are a wide variety of parties, most of them quite small and representing special interests. The two largest are the Hindu Mahasabha and the R. S. S. (National Volunteer Corps). Both of these aim at the creation of a Hindu State, based on Hindu religion and culture. Both are fanatical in their hatred and distrust of the Muslims and publicly advocate the restoration of Akhand Bharat (undivided India). This would mean war with Pakistan, a course of action which some



Hindu extremists are eager to take. They find considerable support among the millions of Hindu refugees from Pakistan, and they indulge in repeated and savage attacks on the Congress regime for its "softness" towards Pakistan and the Indian Muslims.

Recently a new competitor to the Congress has arisen from within its own ranks. In May of this year Acharya Kripalani, a former President of the Congress, resigned to organize a People's Party which, he claims, is committed to Gandhian ideals and will seek to unite all who are opposed to the present Congress administration. His action was the climax of months of inner-party controversy. Kripalani was defeated last year in a close contest for the Congress Presidency by Purushottamdas Tandon, an extremely conservative Hindu. Nehru backed Kripalani in the elections, but since then he has sided with Tandon in an effort to maintain some degree of party unity. The People's Party has adopted an election manifesto calling for a decentralized economy and for a foreign policy of strict neutrality. How much support Kripalani can muster for this program still remains to be seen.

Despite the growing opposition it would be a mistake to under-estimate the strength of the Congress. It still possesses unrivaled national prestige, popular support and party organization. Moreover it is the only party at present with sufficient power to implement its programs and policies. Pandit Nehru is undoubtedly the most popular and respected political figure in India, and under his leadership the Congress will probably command a fair majority in the coming elections.

#### *Can Democracy Succeed?*

Even more important than the matter of who will win the elections is the question: Can India preserve a democratic political structure? India now has a parliamentary government, operating under a constitution modeled after those of Great Britain and the United States. All of the country's political parties, except for extremists of the left and right, are publicly committed to constitutional methods of political and economic reform. But can such a structure and such methods succeed under Indian conditions? This is a question which haunts every thoughtful observer of Indian politics.

Indian democracy must contend with at least the following major difficulties:

a. *Poverty.* No political structure can hope to survive unless it attacks this problem. India's poverty is among the world's worst. Last summer a friend and I visited a workers' colony in Kanpur, one of the country's large industrial cities. We turned off a wide, unpaved street and through a narrow alleyway into a courtyard surrounded by twenty or more small huts. We stooped to enter one and found a smoke-

filled room, not more than ten feet square, where a woman was cooking the evening meal. Her husband told us that eight people slept there each night. The only water for the huts came from a single tap in the courtyard. The only latrine was an open drain leading out to the street. These workers were not worse off than the majority of India's laborers and farmers. Unless democracy can provide them with substantial economic improvement they will scorn its vaunted freedoms.

b. *Illiteracy.* Nearly 90% of India's population can neither read nor write. This does not mean that they are ignorant of politics. Crowds of up to half a million have assembled at times to hear speakers like Gandhi and Nehru. But such crowds are easily swept by emotional appeals, and Indian demagogues are masters of their art. Democracy will remain on a very shaky footing until a far greater proportion of Indians can read and inwardly digest basic political information.

c. *Authoritarian tradition.* Until very recent times India lived under a series of more-or-less despotic rulers. Local village councils had some features of representative government, but this was limited to the higher castes and did not extend beyond the village. For the average villager the government was the official who came once a year to hold court and collect taxes. He is still far from convinced that the new government is in any real sense his own. And democracy as developed in the West contrasts sharply with the essentially rigid and authoritarian patterns of Hindu society. "If the principal gives us an order," a teacher told me, "we obey him—even if we disagree. But if he suggests that we do something, we feel insulted." I have talked with many thoughtful Indians who felt that their country would fare better under a dictator.

d. *Disunity.* India is almost as large as Europe and contains as great a variety of languages and customs. A Kashmiri and a Madras differ as greatly in physical appearance, clothing, eating habits and language as do a Swede and an Italian. English is the only modern language common to all parts of India, and many South Indians resent the attempts of their modern brethren to force them to learn Hindi. It is true that most Indians have a common cultural and religious heritage, and the country developed a surprising amount of national unity in opposition to the British. But one of India's desperate needs today is a common loyalty strong enough to transcend the conflicting claims of her heterogeneous population.

e. *Corruption.* This has grown alarmingly since independence. Bribery and nepotism are common among the new officialdom, as Congress leaders publicly admit. The white Gandhi cap, formerly a proud

symbol of patriotism, is now scoffed at by many disillusioned followers. But it is unlikely that any other party could do much better than the Congress has done. India is discovering that, like other countries, she lacks the moral foundations on which to build a true democracy.

f. *Impatience.* Constitutional procedures are often clumsy and slow, and for this reason many Indians honestly question their value. A major example has been the government's effort at land reform. In both Bihar and Uttar Pradesh the State Legislative Assemblies passed acts abolishing *zamindari* and permitting each tenant to secure his own land for a nominal payment. This sorely-needed reform was held up by High Court rulings that the acts transgressed certain articles of the new Constitution. The Indian Parliament has now amended the Constitution, and Pandi Nehru has voiced the determination of his government to go ahead with the reform. But the delay has been disheartening and Communists have been able to shout even more loudly that "bourgeois constitutional methods" can never win justice for the exploited farmer.

g. *Irresponsible criticism.* How much civil liberty can be granted to groups which are fundamentally opposed to the national constitution? This is a problem posed by Communists and Hindu communalists. The former claim that the present constitution is a bourgeois trick to suppress the workers and that it will be scrapped once they gain power. The Hindu Mahasabha and the R.S.S. are convinced that it is an alien product forced upon India by westernized politicians who betrayed their country to the Muslims. Both groups have used violence and are prepared to do so again. In the meantime they indulge in bitter and irresponsible criticism of the Congress regime. It is primarily because of their attacks that Nehru has asked for greater powers to control the press. Some censorship is probably necessary, but in checking extremists Nehru may well hinder the growth of a healthy and responsible opposition which the Congress sorely needs.

h. *International pressures.* The average politically-conscious Indian would like to develop in peace the gains of his hard-won independence. He resents the fact that his nation is subjected constantly to appeals and pressures from both sides in the international cold war. And if he is forced to choose between East and West, he will do so cautiously. He may be suspicious of Russia and China, especially since the latter's action in Tibet, but he is equally suspicious of the Western allies. He remembers that until very recently Britain, France and Holland controlled most of Southern Asia, and he reads daily that the "imperialists" are still fighting in Malaya and Indo-China. He is warned constantly against the dangers

of American "dollar diplomacy" and he has a real, if reluctant, admiration for the way in which his fellow-Asians, the Chinese and North Koreans, are fighting the world's most powerful nation. These doubts and prejudices deeply affect his estimate of democracy and make its future even more uncertain.

### *A Lesson for Americans*

It is clear that democracy, if it is to survive at all in India, cannot be a carbon copy of the American version. Nor should this distress us, for democracy is not a formal blue-print and Indian conditions are vastly different than those in this country. We need to be deeply thankful for the political miracle of 1947 when India cast off British rule without discarding the precious heritage of British democracy. And we need to extend whatever aid we can, sympathetically and without condescension, to Indian leaders who are striving against baffling obstacles to root the tender plant of freedom in their country's soil.

## **Dangerous Absurdities**

ROGER L. SHINN

"AND all these glorious privileges we owe, of course, to our American system of free enterprise."

Probably twenty other Commencement speakers were saying exactly the same thing on the same day. Probably a couple hundred more were saying it during the same June. How many thousands of people suffer through just such addresses each year might be estimated only by a Gallup statistician.

All of the speakers are educated gentlemen, according to the standards of American culture. Most of them carry a longer string of initials after their names than before them—initials bestowed by various institutions to denote scholarly achievement. Presumably these men know something about the laws of logic and would never be duped by so simple a theory of causation as they are propounding, unless in a platitudinous generalization. To what extent they are taken in by their own folly and to what extent they mouth their absurdities skeptically in order to please people whom it pays to please, probably even they do not know.

### *On the Other Side*

Whether Russia engages in anything strictly comparable to our annual June orgy of self-torture, I have not been informed. Probably not. But there is no lack of authenticated evidence that Russian propagandists are pouring out a similar line, week in and week out, with unwearying enthusiasm.

The slogans need only the slightest verbal change—

the shift of a word or two will adapt them. "All these grand accomplishments are the result of our Communist people's government." Or sometimes it is the great heroes of Russia—suddenly discovered to be the originators of everything from complex technological mechanisms to great forms of art—who are praised. When it comes to self-congratulation, commissars and representatives of American respectability reason curiously alike.

### *The Issue*

I am not here concerned to compare Russian Stalinism with American free enterprise. (For the record I can state that I am quite aware of the values of some of our American freedoms and think them "worth fighting for"—preferably without singing popular songs to that effect. And I have no doubt that I prefer our modified free enterprise system to the Russian monolithic system, though I see room for improvement in either arrangement.) My concern is with a common fallacy of propagandists on both sides. It may be useless to talk about the error, inasmuch as people make it because they want to make it. But it may be worth while.

Rationally considered, American prosperity and power can be traced to a great combination of causes. Even our most doughty American senators in their colossal egotism have not claimed that our virtue produced the geographical situation which enabled us to survive two world wars without devastation of our own land and industries. Even the editors of the so-called *Christian Economics* have not said that "free enterprise" stocked our mountains with coal and ore, or our plains with fertile earth and oil. Obviously free enterprise exploited these opportunities and resources—sometimes with aggressive efficiency, sometimes with wastefulness for which future generations may not call us blessed. Sometimes human values were conserved or enhanced in the process; sometimes they were destroyed. Seen in these terms the "American system" can be evaluated sanely, and efforts can be made to preserve its advantages and minimize its weaknesses. But when every accomplishment of this great nation is attributed to its virtue, the possibility of sober analysis is lost—for who is willing to modify to the least degree his success and his virtue, when the two so fortunately coincide?

And so it is on the other side of the curtain. Russia too has been a "success." At a cost which seems to us terrible, Russia has lifted herself to a position of tremendous power in the world. Every tirade against the Russian menace is an admission of the fact. Again a sober analysis of the causes would point to some geographical advantages and to a wealth of natural resources. It might then point also to many a technological device imported from "capi-

talist" countries, as well as the stubborn, determined, free or forced sacrifices of millions of Russian people. Thus analyzed, the Russian experiment since Czarist times might be evaluated with a desire to continue some of its accomplishments and reduce its stupendously cruel costs. But Stalinists, like Americans, attribute their success to their own virtue. A society may compromise with devils for the sake of success, or it may even give up some success for the sake of its gods; but when its success and its gods are seen to be in complete agreement, it takes more than plutonium and hydrogen to move it.

### *A Historical Perspective*

One need not accept the whole of Arnold Toynbee's analysis of the history of civilizations to recognize the wisdom in his description of the "nemesis of creativity." Civilizations make their genuine achievements. Then they become proud of those achievements, assume that they have found the absolute answer to the problems of history, and either rest on their oars or seek to impose themselves and their way of life upon others. They succumb to idolization of the "ephemeral self" and the ephemeral institutions or techniques which have been associated with their successes. Every challenge to their dominance results, not in a sane endeavor to meet the challenge, but in a stiffening of the proud will which is sure it has found the answer. Thus blinded by self-admiration, civilizations go to their doom.

That such a process has occurred repeatedly is obvious. Only a minimum of intelligence is required to see it. But more than intelligence is required for a civilization to see itself as later generations will see it. Possibly it is not so much genius as a bit of humility which is required. Each civilization sees the errors of its enemies and of other civilizations; it is blind to its own repetition of the errors. The blindness is so persistent, so stubbornly defiant of evidence, that the Old Testament accusations against a "stiff-necked" people have a truth utterly evident—except when it is our own stiff necks which may soon be laid on the block of history.

### *A Prophetic Word*

The passing millenia of history have only made more clear some of the warnings which the biblical prophets made to an unheeding Israel. Conceivably, with the advantage of a long hindsight, we might heed these warnings. In the words of Moses to the children of Israel, about to enter the promised land, is a warning as relevant to our age as to ancient times. For after prophesying a plentiful existence in the land of promise, Moses says:

Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his commandments . . . lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses,



and dwelt therein; and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied . . . then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God . . . and thou say in thine heart, *My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth.*

But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God; for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day. And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish. As the nations which the Lord destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the Lord your God. (Deut. 8.)

Is it possible that our generation might heed such a prophetic word and cease pursuing the false gods of our self-flattering imagination to return to the God who judges us as well as our enemies? Or are we so far gone in the way of idolatry and self-satisfaction that nothing can save us?

It is not likely that the biblical prophetic word

will make much impression in Russia, whose official philosophy denies the Bible. But the Bible remains in Russia; conceivably some may hear it and be moved.

The hope is little greater that the prophetic word will influence America. For here the Bible has been naturalized, adopted, accepted in pious phrases that take all the sting out of it. Our spokesmen are so busy defending Christianity against atheistic philosophies that they have no time to investigate what Christian faith might tell them if they would heed it.

But the word of God has a power that just might make a difference. Repeatedly throughout history it has broken forth from the incrustations of current respectability to speak with liberating power. Sometimes remnants do hear and do take new courage. It could happen in our society.

Yet one wonders whether even the Word of God could accomplish this miracle without a moratorium on speeches at Commencement—and a good many other occasions.

## The World Church: News and Notes

### Norwegian Church Reform Plan Readied

Far-reaching organizational reforms for the (State Lutheran) Church of Norway, under study since 1945, were proposed in a report presented by Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs Lars Moen to the King's Council in Oslo.

The reforms, which may be approved by the Norwegian Parliament early next year, would provide the Church with an official organization on the diocesan and national levels for the first time, and enable laymen to take a prominent part in church administration.

Passage of the enabling legislation, church leaders said, would climax "more than a hundred years' struggle for church reforms." The Lutheran Church became Norway's State Church by special law in 1814. Separation of Church and State is not involved in the present proposals.

Minister Moen's report, which sets forth the reform plan, was based on a preparatory series of recommendations made in 1948 by a special State-appointed commission headed by Bishop Eivind Berggrav, who was then primate of the Church.

The commission was set up in 1945 after agitation for reform was started by volunteer church organizations, which were the only ones existing above the parish level.

Under the proposed organization, the advisory diocesan councils set up in 1933 would be replaced by executive councils which would share with the bishops the regional administration of the Church.

On the national level, coordination of the work of the diocesan councils and supreme authority in spiritual and internal church matters would generally be vested in a new Church Council. This Council also would advise the King in the exercise of his right to decide questions concerning rituals and related matters, and Parliament in its consideration of laws affecting the Church.

The reform plan will be referred to the church committee of Parliament. It is not expected that the legislation will be passed before the parliamentary session beginning next January.

The chief change made by the government in the proposals of the special commission involved the composition of the Church Council. While the commission had proposed a 25-member body, the government raised the number to 33.

Under the plan, the Council would include all eight of the Church's bishops; four other ministers taken from the diocesan councils; two theological professors; two laymen connected with public and higher education; a lawyer; and 16 other laymen, two from each diocesan council.

The five-member diocesan councils would include, besides the local bishop, one minister and three laymen elected by the parish councils. One of the laymen would be connected with public school work.

The predominance of laymen in these regional bodies assumes additional importance because of the fact that among the church affairs to be handled by the diocesan councils is the nomination of candidates for bishop.—*Religious News Service.*

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## America's Agricultural Policy

A group of 60 Christian leaders drawn from 15 farm states, who met at Haverford, Pennsylvania, June 14-16, warned that America's agricultural policy must be grounded in basic moral values of justice, freedom and order and must not be achieved by the dictates of expediency. The meeting was called by the Department of the Church and Economic Life of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.

On the subject of justice the statement declared that discrimination to any individuals while others are enjoying special privileges constitute situations with which no Christian can be at ease.

These principles of justice, freedom and order, the statement made clear, are the minimal requirements which the church insists upon for any arrangement and order of society. They must be included, they insisted, in any attempt to express the Christian ideal of love in human society.

Historically, the statement pointed out, the agricultural producer has often been at the mercy of other forces in our economy. In recent years he has turned successfully to government for assistance. Holding that

it is essential that the agriculture producer be not penalized for the abundance of his production the group maintained that he should participate actively in the processes of marketing his products.

The conference, the first of its kind called by the National Council of Churches, approved, in addition to the general statement, reports of four study groups on phases of the agricultural problem—agriculture's share of the national income, migratory labor, land reform and international problems.

## A Call to Christian Action

A wave of reaction appears to be gaining ascendancy on the religious scene in America. There is no united voice within Protestant Christianity to stem this alarming tide. Those who oppose both Communism and the reactionary economies of some Protestant groups find no strong organization of national scope with which to work.

Concerned about this yawning chasm which now exists between the extremes of left and right, a group headed by the Frontier Fellowship proposes to form a new interdenominational movement which will rally churchmen around central Christian convictions about society.

Discussions this spring about the desperate need for such a group have included persons from Yale Divinity School, the Frontier Fellowship, Virginia Episcopal Seminary, the Fellowship of Southern Churchmen, and others.

It was the common conviction throughout these discussions that this is the time for a reaffirmation, in relevant and incisive terms, of the Christian message for society—that God reveals Himself in Jesus Christ, that He judges the sin of men, that in this judgment God's purposes to redeem the world are disclosed. It was agreed that those who believe that the Christian faith must take its place in the struggle for justice must unite in a strong movement which will become an effective voice in the councils of the church.

Provisionally, the new group is called "Christian Action." A temporary committee has planned a conference to formulate the principles of Christian Action and to set up an effective organization. This conference will meet on September 14-15 at Howard University, Washington, D. C.

Leaders in the conference sessions will include Reinhold Niebuhr of Union Theological Seminary, Kenneth Underwood of Yale Divinity School, A. T. Mollegen of the Episcopal Seminary at Alexandria, David Burgess of the Fellowship of Southern Churchmen and the CIO, John Bennett of Union Theological Seminary, and Marquis Childs, Washington newspaper columnist.

For further details on attending the September conference and on joining the new movement, write to CHRISTIAN ACTION, 100 East Pearl Street, New Haven, Conn.

## Authors in This Issue

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